Fuh-chau, China
June 26th 1850.

To the
Society of Inquiry
Princeton Theo. Semy.

Dear Brethren in Christ;— Your communication by the hand of Mr Fletcher, dated Mar. 1. 1849, was received late in the Autumn of last year. Agreeably with your request that Mr. Baldwin & myself would "furnish two annual letters" from this field for your Semy. I conferred with him on the subject & he consented to write you at that time. In view of this fact I have felt justified in delaying to answer your very acceptable letter thus far; but ~~now~~ this reason will be no longer valid & I now cheerfully attempt what you have requested.

Allow me first of all to thank you for your letter. The information it contained respecting the interest you feel in the cause of missions was cheering to my heart. O that the spirit of missions may still more deeply pervade yr. Semy. The interests of vital piety at home & the glory of God on earth would only be promoted thereby, & who can tell to what extent!

In yr. letter you requested the communication of facts. I hasten therefore to make a few statements respecting this field. Should I say some things which you already know, I hope you will pardon me, as I know not the extent of your information.

Fuhchau, as you are aware, is comparatively a new field of missionary effort; the missionary who has been longest on the ground has been here but three years & a half. The no. of missionaries now here is twelve. Three of them arrived however last month. These statements will show you that but little can have as yet been accomplished for the good of the souls around us. No one of us yet feels at home in the language — most of us can speak it at best only in detached sentences & broken paragraphs. And it will probably require much time & patient study still before any considerable number will be able to speak the language fluently.

But this is our "day of small things. And though it is a trial ~~trying~~ to our hearts to contemplate the smallness of it, we would not despise it. We are encouraged to believe that a more glorious day is before us. At any rate a vast & rapidly perishing harvest is awaiting our labors. In the valley (in which Fuh-chau is situated) no part of which is more than 12 miles distant from our missionary residences, the population is supposed to be about two millions. Could we therefore speak the language readily, we might have easy access to this vast number of souls. Or to state the case in a different form, could all the missionaries now here *preach* in Chinese, we might each have flocks of 160,000 souls to supply with the bread of life, & these flocks we could visit with as small an amount of *travelling* as is required of many pastors to visit their congregations in our native land. Such is the amount of labor before us, that needs to be performed. Such too the responsibility that will rest upon us when we shall by the blessing of God have mastered in some degree this difficult dialect. Do we not need the help of more laborers? Or if that cannot be at present; may we not have the help of your prayers, that when we actually put on the armor for conflict, we may be of that number, of whom "one shall chase a thousand & two shall put ten thousand to flight."

As you my dear Brethren are now surveying the world & watching the signs of the times, to ascertain where God in his Providence would have you labor, I doubt not you will be interested in more minute items of information respecting this field than it would be desirable to communicate to others. I therefore write a few such items, hoping you will pardon me, if it be amiss. ~~With~~ From this people we meet generally a kind reception. Especially is this the case, where they know that we can speak a little of their language. This encourages the hope, that when we can speak it better, they will receive us still more kindly. In our chapels, so far as we have as yet attempted to labor in them, we meet with encouragements & discouragements. The number present is generally as large as we wish, for we are unable to deliver discourses, & therefore confine ourselves to brief remarks & personal conversation. With such a method, we can accomplish more with a few, than with a large number. They are more likely to be attentive to what we say & to inquire more particularly respecting our doctrines. Some of the people at times manifest quite an interest in ascertaining what our doctrines are, but more commonly the people are more anxious to know who we are? from what country we came? what we eat & drink? how many thicknesses of clothing we have on & what they cost? & the like, than they are ~~xx~~ ~~[illegible]~~ to know the things that pertain to the salvation of their souls. Here is the cause of our greatest trials & discouragements in laboring among them viz their indifference to spiritual things. This is painful as we often see it exhibited among them. Some in America seem to suppose that it is only necessary to sound the "glad tidings" in the ear of a heathen & he will then listen awake from the slumbers of spiritual death & turn to God. This is not the case here - nor is it so any where in China if I am not mistaken. Whatever is achieved for these perishing millions must be gained by sterner conflict than this. There are other sources of discouragement in laboring here, which I shall only have room to mention. These are their self conceited superiority over all others which leads them to feel indignant almost at the idea of being taught a "better way" than their own by foreigners - a thirst for money which withers every principle of honesty that might otherwise actuate them, & a reluctance to depart from the long established customs of their country. On each of these points I might enlarge would my sheet allow of it; but it does not. You may think I have drawn a dark picture. I acknowledge that it is so & what connected with the heathen world is not dark? And who is looking forward to a missionary life without expecting to struggle with the powers of darkness? But I do not write to discourage you from entering this field dear Brethren. They that be for us we per. are more than they that be against us. Should I be permitted to write you again I will say more in respect to encouragements. In the mean time, it is my prayer that many of you will be led by the Spirit of God to decide to be missionaries in China - that you will decide to come here to do hard work & gird on the armor accordingly.

Yours Dear Brethren in the love & fellowship of the gospel S. Cummings.